

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS, KITCHEN
(Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Building No. 60)
(Veterans Administration Hospital, Jefferson Barracks)
(Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks
Division)
VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division
1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
Saint Louis
Independent City
Missouri

HABS MO-1943-Z
MO-1943-Z

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS, KITCHEN
(BUILDING 60)

HABS No. MO-1943-Z

- Location:** Building 60, VA Medical Center, 1 Jefferson Barracks Drive,
St. Louis, Missouri
USGS Quadrangle Oakville, Missouri
UTM Coordinates 16 7257947 E 9965229 N
- Date of Construction:** 1952
- Designer:** Jamieson and Spearl, Architects and Engineers, St. Louis, Mo.
- Contractor:** Unknown
- Present Owner:** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Present Use:** Main Kitchen
- Significance:** The Kitchen was part of the early 1950s expansion of the U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, to accommodate the veterans of World War II and the Korean War. The expansion converted the hospital into a neuropsychiatric hospital and was related to a post-war wave of mental health reforms. The Kitchen was designed and built as a central food-preparation facility for the neuropsychiatric hospital, and this building has continued in its original role since its completion in 1952.
- Project Information:** This project was sponsored and funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as mitigation for the demolition of buildings at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, a property that has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places via consensus determination of eligibility between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources State Historic Preservation Office.

Description:

The Kitchen (Building 60) is a one-story brick-clad building with a flat roof. The building's facade is the east wall, while the west (rear) wall of the building is completely covered by a connecting corridor structure that links this building to other buildings in the medical center complex. The east, north, and south walls have alternating bands of orange and yellow brickwork and a yellow brick parapet capped with a thin limestone coping. The building has a reinforced-concrete structural frame consisting of concrete posts, beams, and floor and roof slabs. The wall areas between the concrete posts are filled in with concrete block and then veneered on the exterior with brick. The interior of the Kitchen is largely intact and retains many aspects of the original floor plan as well as many original interior finishes. Since its construction, the building has been used as an institutional kitchen for mass preparation of food for medical center patients.

The building is situated in the northern portion of the medical center complex in a fairly heavily developed area that contains several buildings. Laundry 3 (Building 88) sits east of the Kitchen, while the Infirm Building (Building 51), a sprawling multi-wing facility, sits on the west and south sides. Building 61, the Special Services Building, sits to the north of the Kitchen.

The Kitchen is an L-shaped building of two wings: a north wing that runs north-south and forms one leg of the L, and a south wing that extends east to form the other leg. The wings are discussed separately here. The building does not have one wall that serves as a formal facade. Since it was built at a time when all major buildings at this medical center were linked by connector tunnels, the building was designed and built to be entered and exited mainly through these tunnels, which connect to the building's west side. The building therefore does not have a main formal entrance, and does not have one wall of the building that clearly serves as the front of the building; the description below therefore does not refer to a facade.

The south wing is rectangular, with the long side of the rectangle facing south. The east wall of the south wing features a band of orange brick with alternating recessed and projecting courses of brick sandwiched in between bands of yellow brick. The east wall has a recessed portion that sits to the south, and a projecting portion positioned on the north end of the wall. The recessed portion has a loading dock with a concrete base, concrete steps, a set of flat metal double doors, and a single one-light metal door. The loading dock is sheltered by a suspended, flat metal roof. The recessed portion also has three one-over-one metal replacement windows. The north projecting portion has an east wall and a south wall. The south wall features a set of flat metal double doors. The east wall of the projecting portion features a single one-over-one metal replacement window. Some recent metal utility boxes and pipe conduits are also attached to this wall but are not original features.

The south wall of the south wing of Building 60 has yellow and orange banded brickwork identical to the brickwork of the east wall. This wall also has seven one-over-one metal replacement windows, with two groups of three window openings each, and one single window. Three of these windows are on the west end of the wall, and four of the windows are on the east end. In the center of the south wall is a projecting bay with a single flat metal door, and to the east of the bay is a metal staircase that gives access to the building's roof. The north wall of the south wing features two one-over-one metal replacement windows and a third opening that is filled in with metal. A small bay projects out of the building at the corner between this building and the east wall of the north wing. This projecting bay has a slightly lower roofline than the rest of the building.

The west wall of the building is shared by the two wings. This wall is completely covered by the connector structure that links this building to other facilities at the medical center. The connector structure has yellow brick walls and a series of horizontal metal and glass-block windows positioned high on the wall.

The north wing of the building is nearly square in form, and the roofline of the east portion of this wing is slightly higher than the roofline of the west portion. The north wing's east wall features three large window openings, each of which is filled with three one-over-one metal replacement windows. The north wall of the north wing has a projecting bay at the northeast corner; this bay has one flat metal door. The yellow brick of this bay is lighter in color than the brick on the rest of the building, and this bay does not appear on the building's original floor plan, so it is an addition and is not original. The remainder of the wall has four window openings. The two larger openings each are fitted with two one-over-one metal replacement windows, and the two smaller openings have single one-over-one metal replacement windows.

The interior of the Kitchen has changed very little since the building was completed, other than some equipment updates. The interior layout of the Kitchen includes hallways, a main kitchen space, and several smaller spaces for preparing and storing food items. The interior also has offices to accommodate food-service management and administrative staff. The interior walls are composed of painted gypsum board, plaster, and glazed tan-colored terra-cotta block; the terra-cotta block appears most often in hallways and the food preparation spaces since it is a durable wall surface, easy to clean and resistant to humidity and moisture. Ceilings throughout the building are plaster, gypsum board, or acoustical tile. The entire food-preparation area and many of the hallways have dark orange terra-cotta tile flooring.

The interior of the north wing has a long double-loaded corridor that leads into a series of small to medium storage and food-preparation rooms. The south wing is dominated by the main food-preparation area, which is a large open space equipped with stainless steel sinks, cabinets, tables, and equipment such as ovens. The north wing also includes several office spaces, several small food-preparation rooms, and restrooms.

History:

The Kitchen's construction is related to a post-World War II conversion of the VA Hospital at Jefferson Barracks from a general medicine facility to a neuropsychiatric hospital. With the end of the war, a large number of veterans required medical and psychiatric treatment, and to address this situation in St. Louis, the VA constructed the John Cochran Hospital downtown for general medicine and converted the existing Jefferson Barracks facility (south of the city) to a neuropsychiatric hospital. The John Cochran Hospital was built in the late 1940s and early 1950s, while initial new construction and remodeling for the neuropsychiatric facility was carried out at Jefferson Barracks from 1950 to 1952.

1940s Mental Health Reform and Post-World War II VA Neuropsychiatric Hospital Design

The conversion of the Jefferson Barracks facility to a modern neuropsychiatric hospital was related to a wave mental health reform at the end of World War II. Public demands for improved conditions were stoked by a 1946 article in *Life* magazine, written by medical writer Albert Q. Maisel. Entitled "Bedlam 1946: Most of U.S. Mental Hospitals Are a Shame and a Disgrace," the article exposed shocking abuses in mental hospitals.¹ By 1947, as part of an effort to build new VA hospitals, Dr. Paul Haun, a psychiatrist with the VA's Washington D.C. office, developed the "Schematic Plan for a 1,000-Bed VA Hospital," a general plan for psychiatric hospital facilities that recommended the types of buildings to be provided, as well as the number of floors and other details. This plan was publicized in the article "New Trends in Hospital Design," by Haun and Dr. Z. M. Lebensohn, in the February 1948 edition of *The American Journal of Psychiatry*.²

Haun's designs emphasized the importance of recreational and occupational training activities, and he tried to reduce the stigma of psychiatric hospitalization by making the facilities resemble resorts or college campuses.³ He recommended that each psychiatric hospital should have a multi-story admissions and intensive treatment building to handle both the initial observation and diagnosis of newly arrived patients and the various forms of intensive psychiatric treatment that followed the diagnosis. Haun favored the multi-story layout because it allowed doctors quick, easy access to patients and also made it easier to contain the patients and secure the facility. Patients would stay in this building for no more than four to six months.⁴ If intensive treatment was not effective, the patient would be

¹ Albert Q. Maisel, "Bedlam 1946: Most of U.S. Mental Hospitals Are a Shame and a Disgrace," *Life*, May 6, 1946, 102-118.

² Paul Haun and Z. M. Lebensohn, "New Trends in Hospital Design," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 104, no. 8 (February 1948): 555-564.

³ *Ibid.*, 564.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 557-559.

transferred out of the admissions and intensive treatment building and into one of several long-term care buildings for continued treatment. In contrast to the admissions and treatment building, Haun recommended that the continued treatment buildings should be low, sprawling structures of only one or two floors, which would allow patients easier passage to outdoor activities, an important part of Haun's treatment philosophy.⁵ Although the main focus of the Haun model was on treatment, administrative, and recreational facilities, hospitals modeled after Haun's plan also required appropriate support facilities such as boiler houses, kitchens, and laundries.

Function of the Kitchen at Jefferson Barracks

Construction drawings for the Kitchen were completed in January 1950 by Jamieson and Spearl, Architects and Engineers, of St. Louis. Jamieson and Spearl was founded in St. Louis in 1918 when James Jamieson partnered with George Spearl. The firm was notable for designing major buildings at several colleges and universities across the Midwest, including ones at Washington University in St. Louis. Jamieson died in 1941, before the firm did work at the VA Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, but the firm continued to use the name Jamieson and Spearl into the 1950s.⁶

The original floor plan for the Kitchen included a large main kitchen space; separate refrigeration areas for meat, vegetables, and salad; separate preparation rooms for meat and vegetables; storage facilities; a scullery; rooms for handling garbage; locker rooms for employees; and an office for a dietary clerk.⁷

The Kitchen served as the central kitchen for the hospital complex, and food was served in multiple dining facilities that were included in most of the new buildings that had been constructed at the medical center between 1950 and 1952. Food from the kitchen could be wheeled on carts to the various medical center buildings using the center's extensive system of above-ground connecting corridors, which linked the Kitchen to all of the major medical center buildings that accommodated patients. While the Kitchen was the main food-preparation facility for the medical center, some of the long-term continued-treatment buildings, such as the Infirm, Spinal Cord/Tuberculosis, and Disturbed buildings

⁵ Ibid., 555-564.

⁶ Esley Hamilton, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the Washington University Hilltop Campus Historic District*, 1978, on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

⁷ Jamieson and Spearl, Architects and Engineers, *Construction Drawings for 544-Bed Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Kitchen*, 1950, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

(Buildings 51, 52, and 53), had small kitchens attached to their dining rooms so that food could also be prepared on-site.⁸

The Kitchen continued to serve as the main food-preparation facility for the medical center from the 1950s through the 1990s, and it is still used for that purpose today. Windows throughout the building were replaced in 1982 as part of a multi-building window-replacement project at the medical center campus.⁹ Otherwise, the Kitchen has undergone only fairly minor remodeling, and the interior retains much of its 1950s layout and many original interior finishes. Redevelopment plans for the medical center that will be carried out in the coming years do not call for the demolition of this building in the near future.

Sources:

Hamilton, Esley. *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the Washington University Hilltop Campus Historic District*. 1978. On file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City.

Haun, Paul, and Z. M. Lebensohn. "New Trends in Hospital Design." *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 104, no. 8 (February 1948).

Jamieson and Spearl, Architects and Engineers. *Construction Drawings for 544-Bed Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Kitchen*. 1950. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

———. *Construction Drawings for 544-Bed Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Infirm Building and Disturbed Building*. January 1950. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

Maisel, Albert Q. "Bedlam 1946: Most of U.S. Mental Hospitals Are a Shame and a Disgrace." *Life*, May 6, 1946.

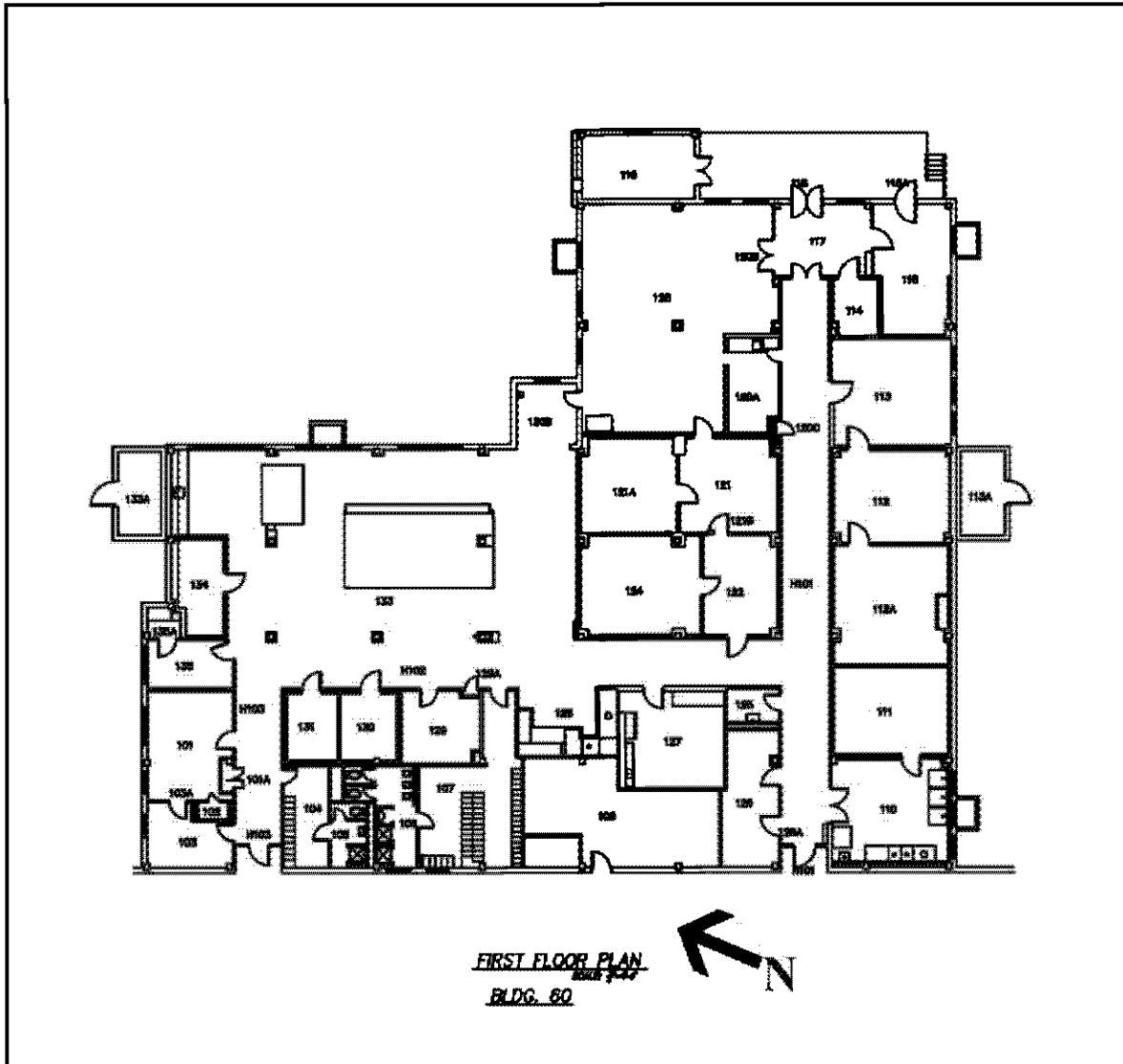
U.S. Veterans Administration. Construction drawing files for Building 60, St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division. 1950-2010. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

⁸ Jamieson and Spearl, Architects and Engineers, *Construction Drawings for 544-Bed Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Infirm Building and Disturbed Building*, 1950, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

⁹ U.S. Veterans Administration, Construction drawing files for Building 60, St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, 1950-2010, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

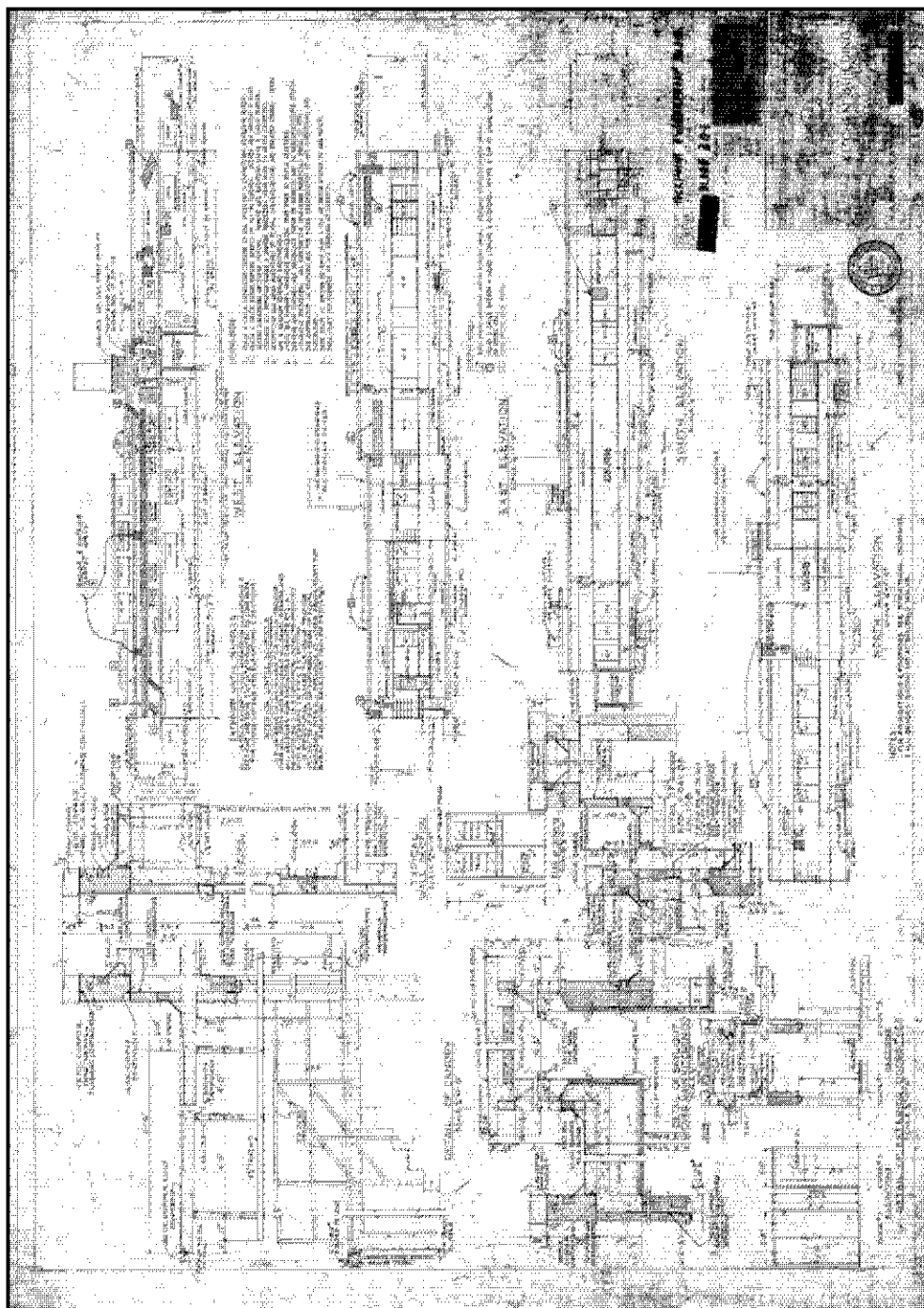
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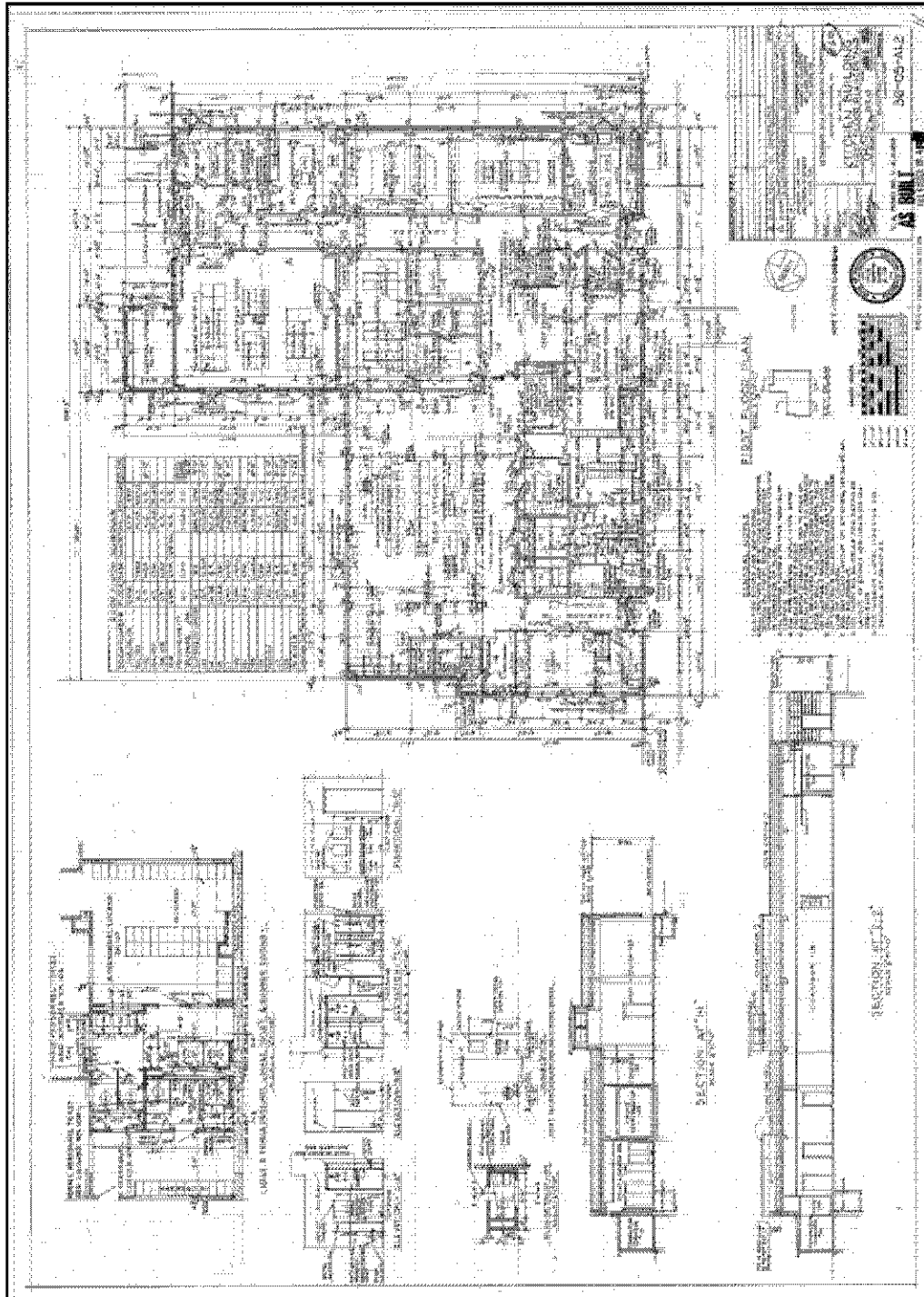
Kitchen (Building 60), current floor plan for first floor

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Original elevations, sections, and details for the Kitchen (Building 60), 1950

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Original plans, sections, and details for the Kitchen (Building 60), 1950